Ecocritical Representation of Literature
An Indian Perspective

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Edited by

Samrat Bisai

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Epilogue

Unto the Heaven be Peace, Unto the Sky and the Earth be Peace,
Peace be unto the Water, Unto the Herbs and Trees be Peace,
Unto all the Gods be Peace, Unto Brahma and unto All be Peace.
And may We realize that Peace.
Om Santi Santi Santu

(Santi Path, Vedic Chanting)

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Dedicated
To
Almighty God
and
My Loving Teacher N. Sharda Iyre

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Preface

Since the dawn of civilization, human life has been reared in the lap of nature and nourished by its great vital force. Nature has been perceived by various philosophers and litterateurs through different ages in multifaceted dimensions. To Wordsworth, nature is a friend, philosopher and guide whereas in the poems of Tennyson, nature always plays a prominent role affecting the lives of human beings. In Synge's plays, human beings are mere puppets in the hands of nature.

Although Ecocriticism as a theoretical and literary discourse was not introduced till the late twentieth century, the intricate nexus between man and nature has been beautifully portrayed in several texts. It was 1978, when William Rueckert first used the critical term in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" by which he intends "the application of ecology and ecological concepts in the study of literature" (Cheryll Glotfelty, xiv-xx). Michael P. Cohen describes that it focuses on literary expression of human experience primarily in a naturally and consequently in a culturally shaped world (xii). Above all, it demands a proximate analytical exploration of the interrelation between nature and human environment.

The connection between man and environment has been aesthetically rendered in a number of literary compositions of India like the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*,

Abhigyanam Shakuntalam etc. These texts present close relationship among nature, man and spirituality. In the words of Ruskin Bond:

> Hinduism came closest to being a nature religion. Rivers, rocks, trees, animals, and birds all play their part, both in mythology and everyday worship. This harmony is most evident in remote places like this, and I hope it does not lose unique character in the ruthless urban advance. (*Rain in the Mountain*, 234)

This rich Indian tradition is carried forward by writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, Jibananda Das, Satinath Vaduri, Manik Bandyopadhyay, Raja Rao, Arundhati Roy, Ruskin Bond and many more, who have excellently crafted the association of man and nature and how the livelihoods of human beings are influenced by nature. Amitav Ghosh is one among those promising authors who writes about nature in relation to man; human being's imperialist attitude over nature and its fatal consequences on this planet earth, our abode of living.

These collections of academic essays will inevitably provide the readers a distinct viewpoint to study the correlation between nature and human life and how nature has been illustrated in diverse literary works. These research articles are based on the writings of Indian authors from the beginning of twentieth century to the present time, all who have profoundly contributed in the enrichment of this literary genre. I hope this book will be useful to the academicians, researchers, budding scholars and students who earnestly want to explore a new horizon in this domain. I am also thankful to Raj Raj Mukhopadhay for his sincere and tireless support. I

am also honoured to work with distinguished scholars and respected professors whose tireless support, unique insight and expertise have helped me bring out this landmark publication.

Samrat Bisai

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